

Ludwig's "The Son of Man"

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HERR LUDWIG COHN, now Prof. Emil Ludwig, has written a "Life" of Christ. Parts of it appeared in the *Daily Express*, Lord Beaverbrook genuinely supposing, I believe, that it would "do good."

I should not have mentioned it here, had not I been asked to do so on the grounds that Catholics would be questioned about it and would want to know what to say. It would be no good if they just said it was "blasphemous"; for the persons one speaks to would not all be Christians; accusations of "blasphemy" would cut no ice. You would have to show that the book was *scientifically* bad, and then only would you make an impression.

THE SCIENTIFIC WAY

The scientific way of writing history is, to collect all possible information about your subject, to seek to estimate its worth, and then to examine it impartially and see what results emerge from it. You ought not to start with prejudices, such as that "all religious authors are untrustworthy," or, that "my family always did adore, or detest, Napoleon, and so do I." If you approached a subject like that you would be twisting the evidence in no time.

Especially must you be on your guard against your personal preferences if you are examining a mind rather than an event—the inner rather than the outward element. For you are apt to read into people what you possess in your own mind, for good or ill.

Dr. Ludwig has written on Napoleon, Bismarck, and the ex-Kaiser, seeking always their "psychology," the mainsprings of motive, the sequence of ideas. He now professes to do this for Him whom Christians worship as God's Son made man.

MANIPULATING DOCUMENTS

I might say that he proves false to the first law of such psychological examination at the outset, for he *assumes* that Christ was a man and nothing else; this involves his manipulating any document that states the contrary until he gets rid of what clashes with his opinion.

There was a clever skit, once, which "proved" that Napoleon was a Sun god. That, too, implied manipulation of documents: but it was cleverly done; I have to state bluntly at the outset that Dr. Ludwig manipulates his documents in a way so unscientific that he would have been turned out of a professor's room for impertinence, had he, as an undergraduate, shown up an essay written on such lines.

WHAT THE PREFACE SHOWS

I begin, then, by stating that the book is *scientifically* bad, because its author *starts* to write it with a fully formed opinion about its subject, and then maltreats the evidence with clumsy violence till it shall state more or less what he wants it to.

The preface, by itself, condemns the book. It does more than suppress truth or suggest the false, it lies. Apart from details like stating that "least of all do we know his [Our Lord's] personal appearance," only to follow this later (p. 76) by the assertion that He had black hair parted in the middle, he says that concerning the public life we have "*only* conflicting stories."

GRATUITOUS STATEMENTS

"Only"! As if none of the Gospel stories corroborated one another! Grant "only" to be a slip: they "contradict one another in many respects"; they are also "contradicted by the scanty non-Christian authorities." We deny the first part of this sentence, and ask what non-Christian authority of *equally authoritative* value with the Gospels, contradicts them? None.

He says that we have "very little more" than the beginning and the end, the baptism and the trial. What lies between is "chaotic." Nonsense. There are more ways than one of arranging evidence. You may arrange it according to time, for example, or according to subject matter. That

is what often happens in the Gospels: parables, for example, are often grouped together, very naturally, whenever Our Lord may have spoken them.

WHAT A HISTORIAN SHOULD NOT DO

Dr. Ludwig proceeds to "arrange" the data "psychologically," so that when the account of the "latter period" is "*made*" to follow the former in a "natural" fashion, the character of Jesus is freed from contradictions and so forth (p. 12). I can only say that it needs a deal of "making."

And "natural"? That begs the question. Suppose there was an element of super-natural in the life of Jesus? You would then find hints of that when you didn't expect them. No sage historian ought to say: "Such an incident does not fit in with what *I* think 'natural' in the development of this character *as I* conceive it: I shall therefore, without documentary evidence, and even in spite of it, put it in somewhere else."

A COOL ASSUMPTION

The fact that Dr. Ludwig has constantly done this in his "Life" of Christ generates the fear that he may have done so in his "Life," e. g., of Napoleon; suspicion is thereby thrown back upon all his other books, lest they be as worthless as this one is.

The author does not "meddle with theology: that arose later." Cool assumption! What is the kernel of theology? The nature of Jesus Christ. When, then, He asked: "Whom do men say that I am?" and insisted on getting an answer, and said that one answer alone was right, He was inaugurating all the theology that ever has existed.

BEGGING THE QUESTION

But these "tremendous consequences" of His life are ignored by the author, "as if they were unknown to him—as *they were unknown to Jesus, and unwilling*" (p. 12). Bland begging of an enormous question—in fact, of the *whole* question!

Do the Gospels suggest, for a moment, that Christ did not claim to foresee or intend the future? Did He never so much as *claim* to prophesy? Of course He did, according to the documents.

Therefore Dr. Ludwig's only chance is to regard as "interpolation" anything which, in the documents, conflicts with his a-priori view. "Much," says he, "has *been omitted* because *modern research* has rejected it as *spurious*." Easy is the critic's task, if he can cut out everything that does not fit his theory.

THEORISTS DISAGREE

Naïve indeed is he who imagines that even theorists will agree as to their theories, and therefore as to what ought to be cut out. Does he imagine that Harnack and Loisy, the German and French scholars, to mention no others, cut out the *same sets* of inconvenient texts? Of course they do not, since their theories are incompatible.

And of course Dr. Ludwig knows they do not, unless he has never read them. He has, then, either not read essential books, or, having read them, is insincere. I fear he may not have read them (since he thinks his psychological method is good enough by itself) *and* is insincere, for to profess to be scientifically honest, and to use slap-dash phrases like "modern research," as if all research were agreed on the points he deals with, is not sincere.

WHAT THE EVANGELISTS TELL

Journalists like Mr. Hamilton Fyfe might allow themselves that sort of phrase, and indeed, after all, perhaps Dr. Ludwig is no better. People, he continues, "*fail to observe*" that only John tells us that Mary was present upon Calvary, and only Luke that Jesus visited the Temple as a child.

"Fail to observe"! Who fails? As if we do not value the *four* Evangelists precisely *because* one tells us what the others don't! We turn with affection towards Luke *because* of his childhood stories, and for what he tells us of Our Lady: to Mark, *because* of his vivid little touches: to John, *because* of his incomparable conversations and special atmosphere. "Fail to observe"!

AUTHOR'S PURE INVENTIONS

Dr. Ludwig makes little use (p. 13) of St. John, apparently because it is hopeless to try to "interpret" his ac-

counts of the miracles "naturalistically," which is what he aims at doing throughout, thereby again defying the evidence, since (for once) "modern research" is agreed that even in that hypothetical document which is supposed to underlie even Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the miraculous element is integral therein.

"MISHMASH"

You could no more cut it out than you could excise the nervous system from a living body. He confesses, then, to cutting a great deal out, leaving behind some fragmentary dead stuff out of which he proceeds to form a story.

Well, anyhow, he rather plaintively pleads, I have "superadded" nothing. That would be to make a "historical novel," which he calls a "mishmash." The reviewer in the *Times* Literary Supplement is grateful to him for that word: it exactly describes, says he, the work of Dr. Ludwig.

He plumes himself on being able to give "chapter and verse" for everything that he says Jesus said or did; "only in outlooks and methods of expression, only in bridges of thought whereby the words and the deeds are interconnected, has the author given *free rein to imagination . . .*"

As though I should first settle in my mind that the Pope is really a Protestant; as though I should then read a sentence of his in which he alludes to the guidance of the Holy Spirit residing in the heart of every Christian; as though I should then omit as spurious everything he has ever said about the authority of the Church; and then, giving "free rein to my imagination," should build my "bridge of thought," and announce that the Pope, mentioning the Holy Ghost, was having a slap at Father Woodlock. . . .

A GREATER IMPERTINENCE

Dr. Ludwig has indeed the decency to say that one who should "venture to ascribe imaginary sayings and doings" to Jesus would have to be a person at least "equal to Jesus in intuitive power."

Apart from his acknowledging in these words that the

four Evangelists, most of whose work, he assumes, consists precisely of imaginary words and deeds assigned to Jesus, are all four of them as great as He was, I beg to be informed whether to "give free rein to imagination" in assigning ideas, views, and motives to Our Lord is not a far greater impertinence than to assign to Him imaginary deeds.

To read a man's mind, so as to assign his thought-bridges, demands a far greater "intuition" than to equip his biography with fictitious but characteristic incidents. Yet, he insists, his business is to portray the "*inner* life" of Jesus.

GIVING THE SITUATION AWAY

He allows that his is only one among many possible interpretations; but, he concludes (p. 16), giving the whole situation away, it is one that "*aspires* to be in harmony with the spirit of our own time."

"Aspires" to be! Amazing flight of academic snobbery! Suburban assumption that the fashion of the moment is the only one that can be best! Why, apart from the fashions in criticism changing as often as do those of dress, it was Dr. Ludwig's business, just as a historian, to interpret Christ's Life, not in harmony with the spirit of *our* time, but in the spirit of *His* time.

It is just because you catch Dr. Ludwig continually introducing ideas and moods that belong to our harassed and sentimental age, that you feel his interpretation is anyhow psychologically false, just as he reveals that the method of his approach to his subject, and of his dealing with his evidence, is scientifically bad.

PURE INVENTION

The "Prelude" (pp. 17-61) is an account of Jerusalem in Our Lord's time, passable, if you do not mind the flamboyant journalese in which it is couched. Personally, even in those earlier books I could not stand the continual "historic present"—"Night broods . . . The priests peer through the darkness" (p. 16); "Night broods . . . The priests sway drowsily . . ." (p. 61).

Chapter I is "Calling" (pp. 63-111). Pages 63 to 82 are, I shall be forgiven for repeating, "mishmash." They

profess to contain the dreamings of the boyhood and adolescence of Our Lord. "Thought-bridges"? No such thing. Pure invention. "His thoughts turn to the harsh speech of his father and mother. He can never think fervently of God when he is listening to them" (p. 66).

The picture of this young Jew "snuggling" into the grass (a startling feat for a Palestinian, any way) reminds one of what a Berlin Protestant professor might draw, in a romantic moment, of a Tyrolese peasant. . . .

On p. 82 we begin to hear about the Baptist, and we begin, too, to observe that Dr. Ludwig quotes what suits him with perfect serenity whether or no it be mentioned by one Evangelist only. He "fails to observe" that the Baptist's advice to publicans, for instance, is related by Luke alone. The baptism follows.

Dr. Ludwig, reading the inner mind of Christ, remarks that "He has conviction of sin." He disregards, of course, the question: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Christ knew quite well that the "prince of this world" had "nothing at all" in Him. But the author prefers to omit that.

CINEMA LIBRETTO

From now on, we are favored with an exhibition of a young man in great spiritual torment—what is the meaning of the "call" He fancies He has heard in His heart? Fasting clears His mind in one sense, but sets going within Him all manner of temptations to ambition and self-importance. He rejects these, and decides to go and live quietly at home.

But on the way He encounters the Baptist being taken off to prison. He regards this as a sign that *He* is that "greater than I" of whom John had spoken. His features "stiffen into a mask." Impossible to deal seriously with this cinema libretto!

A BABYISH EXPLANATION

Without fear, then, of irreverence, we retail that this film-hero of Ludwig's making finds, on arriving home, that His relatives have gone off to a marriage; He needs distraction after His recent anxieties: He follows them: everyone save He is drunk—He is a "kill-joy" and has a

"spectral visage"; feeling He must exercise His power, whatever it may be, He hypnotizes a cook into thinking that he has turned water into wine.

I do not wonder that reputable critics, whatever their views on Christianity, have turned with contempt from these pages of the librettist. Not only has he used the Fourth Gospel, that he decries, as "evidence," but he offers a more babyish "explanation" of the miracle of Cana than any I have read in the German rationalists of the mid-nineteenth century. Far, far better to suppose, like Loisy, that the event never occurred at all.

After this chapter (a positive arcade of thought-bridges erected to lead from the author's own idea of Christ to the author's picture of Christ, with nothing whatsoever to do with the Jesus of the Gospels), we have a chapter, "Glad Tidings" (pp. 113-176), which is more tolerable because, instead of being sheer invention, it contains a number of the sayings of Our Lord which always are dear. Not but what it is full of plenty besides thought-bridges, such as allusions to what Our Lord looked like, which is just what the author had lamented that one cannot tell. The Glad Tidings appear to be pretty flat, if one may say so.

MORE IMAGINATION

Certainly God is mentioned; but apparently the rest of them sums itself up into an easy-going optimism that reminds me (I must be forgiven for repeating) of Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, who would like us all to be cheery and pally.

The "prophet," however, has His bad moments—when He has worked cures, which He does because of His exhausting magnetism; He has to "sink to the ground, lying on the sand among the reeds, striving to regain his composure." Not very much thought-bridge about this incident, I fear, though plenty of rein given to imagination.

"Fear and secret loathing" are the Nazarene's reaction to the role of healer thus thrust upon Him—though why people who were just being told that life was all right after all should want to thrust such a role on Him I cannot see.

There is, in fact, a violent discrepancy between the character of Christ's person and teaching, as represented by Dr. Ludwig, and the fanatic enthusiasm apparently aroused in the mob that listens. One gets the impression of a benevo-

lent young Wesleyan talking platitudes at Lourdes and arousing thus a volcano-ful of miracles.

MORE CUTS AND OMISSIONS

Though Dr. Ludwig, moreover, has got up a good deal of stuff for local coloring, one would suppose he never had read a page of the Old Testament. For the attractiveness of Christ's teaching appears to have consisted—apart from its cheery common sense—in its "verbal imagery," which He applies "even to God," despite the law that no images were to be made of Him: yet this preacher shows Him as king, owner of a vineyard, friendly host, master of many servants . . .

Of what other images does the entire Old Testament, does any single page of the prophets, consist? On the other hand, just as Ludwig has to make hay of chronology at large, so he has to cut out every single reference to sin and the punishments due thereto, and, in fact, to assert (p. 128) that Jesus does not "even refer" to them. Such are the exigencies of this psychological method.

Another clash, however, in the psychology of this film-personage is found when, despite His youthful charm and cheeriness, He regards the possession of wealth as sinful in itself, and again when this modest teacher, who regards Himself as a prophet, no doubt, "does not even hint at an assumption of the Messianic role."

THE "SON OF MAN"

He picks out for Himself the title "Son of Man" from Ezechiel, because it was the humblest name that the prophets ever had "conceived" . . . As if Daniel had not existed nor any of the apocalyptists, and as if since them that title had not been one of the most mystical and Messianic that existed! And, despite this elaborate self-effacement, He selects associates, because thus He can "more speedily win the *fame* which is essential to his *influence*" . . . Thought-bridges here seem broken.

However, He develops "enemies"—not the heathen, of whom He spoke with "abhorrence," but the ecclesiastical officials of the day. Another psychological clash—this simple, affectionate soul begins to dislike sick people. They take too much out of Him—when the woman touches the

hem of His garment and is healed He feels He has lost strength (!); in a word, He is growing bored with all this being kind; it interferes with "his work as a teacher" (p. 163).

Suddenly John, from prison, sends to ask the preacher if He *is* the Messiah. He reels beneath the shock, and recovers from it only to find His "customary gentleness" has vanished; pride, "chilly pride," settles down upon Him.

He frankly accepts the challenge—announces Himself Messiah—is regarded by His home folks as a madman and is set upon. He crosses the frontier, mixes with Samaritans and pagans, and is stamped the enemy of His people.

For the first time there has been a little subtlety in Dr. Ludwig's pages, and the real drama of Our Lord's career exempts him from inventing quite so many, quite so vulgar thought-bridges and events. . . .

A WRONG INTERPRETATION

Chapter III, "The Shadows Darken" (pp. 177-222), represents Our Lord's life now as sheer flight. And also as the collapse of His character. Opposition makes Him arrogant—He assumes a kingly bearing and regards Himself no more as Son of Man, but as Son of God. (I repeat, the violent distinction between these two titles does not exist. That Dr. Ludwig thinks it does proves that he cannot really have studied the history and exact meaning of either of them.)

The execution of John puts the last touch to the gradual envenoming of the prophet's mind; and I will say that the one picturesque line followed out by Ludwig in this libretto is the egging on of Jesus by the Baptist to desert the peaceful and idyllic preaching of His youth and to become not only like the savage John, but more fanatic even than he.

Need I say that there is not the slightest evidence in the Gospels for this idea? Nonetheless, it is a dramatic one, and provides a spurious unity to Dr. Ludwig's "mishmash."

Under the thrust of this fanaticism the ex-shepherd announces that He has to go to Jerusalem (whither Ludwig makes Him never yet to have gone), convinced that He will be set upon and die there. Then He will be enthroned in Heaven for ever. (The only part of Our Lord's teaching about the "end" that this author condescends to retain is

this detail concerning His own glorification. This is a touch of Germanism versus the French.)

RELAPSE INTO MELODRAMA

It is not necessary to describe the last two chapters. The final one, concerning the Crucifixion, marks a relapse into melodrama. It makes no pretence of being honest.

In order to cause Jesus to die in despair, Ludwig has to turn the cry "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" into an expression of mere misery, though he must know perfectly well that those words are the beginning of one of the most triumphant psalms of the Old Testament, and that their whole point is that the apparent "forsaking" by God was no such thing.

And he has to omit the serene "Into Thy hands," though he regards St. Luke as a usable authority when he likes; and of course he not only omits anything from St. John, but asserts that Our Lord's mother was "far away." This merely in order to color up the drama—the prophet's work had dwindled down to two or three women standing near. . . .

He then announces that the stone had been rolled away by Saturday evening, and that "in waking dreams" the women believed that they had seen "the risen Jesus in the flesh." So the book ends.

A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION

I repeat, I do not even feel inclined to denounce this book from the Catholic standpoint. Were Dr. Ludwig a Catholic, and then said the things he did, I might perhaps tell him not only that he was unscientific, but blasphemous, and required to go to confession and to make a public retraction.

But he is not. He is a Jew, and, I should suppose, an unbelieving one at that. I think it really possible that he is a swollen-headed man, who, having achieved a lot of publicity by means of his books on Napoleon and the rest, has thought he would try his hand on the supreme Person and Problem of the world.

I think he may even be feeling himself rather magnanimous. "You might have expected me," thinks he, "who am a Jew, to attack the Founder of you Christians. Oh, dear me, no! No, no, no. I will just explain him. Through no

merit of mine, I am gifted with extraordinary insight. You poor Christians are unhappy because you feel that Modern Thought, the Spirit of our Times, are making it impossible for you to believe in your dear Saviour. Well—of course—in the old sense, the old medieval way, perhaps it *is* impossible. You have been making psychological mistakes these many centuries! Allow *me*. I will build a thought-bridge or two. I will unveil a few states of mind in your Prophet, indicate a few motives that have escaped your attention. Far, far from me to shake your faith. I will not interfere even with your quaint theology. I just disregard it. I will pretend that Christ's life had no consequences, I will just tell you about the Man, and make a whole book out of what biographers are rather fond of doing in a mere last chapter. After 'Lloyd George the Economist: Lloyd George the Politician,' you get 'Lloyd George the Man.' I will just show you that—the *inside of Christ's mind*. I don't profess to give you a full history. . . . I just get inside His mind and tell you all about it. The Evangelists? Poor men! they went all wrong. The Apostles? Well—simple fishing lads—what could you expect? Allow all those enthusiasms and fanaticisms to simmer down. It will take about 1900 years, I confess. But then *I* shall come along, and put the whole thing on a proper basis for you. Now then! aren't I a kind and friendly gentleman?"

WHAT YOU CAN SAY ABOUT IT

You will now accuse me, from what I have written, of using the psychological method myself, and of building Dr. Ludwig's own thought-bridges for him! Well, I agree at once that I recognize the possible value of his method. In fact, I am all for it, when it is properly used, just as I am for corporal punishment or alcohol. . . .

I hold that, if you are to translate a man's book properly, you must not only know the meaning of the words as you might find them in a dictionary, but as they could have been used in the period and place when and where the author wrote, and indeed, what they must have meant upon the lips of *that* author, and even more, what they will have meant for him when he was in such and such a mood. . . .

You have, I acknowledge, to be able to get inside his mind, and to guess what *sort* of a mind he possessed just

at the time when he was writing. Impossible task? Risky and difficult task, most certainly. But perhaps not impossible. It demands, however, certain prerequisites.

SOAKED IN EVIDENCE

You must be simply soaked in all the evidence obtainable concerning the personage and his environment and his past and the consequences of his work. You can learn a deal about a man by observing what he made people think or feel like, and what he became in the hands of his posterity.

Now, I should say that, *assuming* that Dr. Ludwig really does know the Bismarck-Napoleon-Kaiser period sufficiently well to dare to write a psychological history thereof, it is enormously improbable that he will *also* have been able similarly to soak himself in the 10 B. C. to 20 A. D. Pales-tinian period. In fact, he obviously hasn't. Therefore he oughtn't to dare to embark on psychological estimates of its personages, especially if he needs to dare to make hay of such documents as exist, and to say: "In spite of the evidence, I am quite sure that what happened was so and so; and the 'inner mind' of the persons whom, by correcting the evidence, I create, was so and so." And he totally disregards what happened in consequence of what he relates, whereas he should have guided himself by it.

AN EXPLANATION

To explain myself, let me be bumptious and quote my own humble efforts in the *Month*. I have undertaken to write the "history" of an imaginary Greek family from 1500 B. C. to 50 A. D. At the present stage of the story, the representatives of the family are living on the coast of Asia Minor about 900 A. D. Now I really have soaked myself in such evidence as I can find—in fact, as exists.

I don't believe there is anything that I haven't read which belongs to that period (There isn't much, you know! But you require to soak in what there is!) If I mention a flower, you may be sure that the evidence shows that such a flower existed in *that* part of Asia *then*: if I mention that a cliff was red, you may be sure that evidence exists that it *was* red.

And I do *not* mention, *e. g.*, cats, because it is pretty

clear that there weren't any then in Europe or even Asia Minor. (There *could* have been, and I wouldn't hesitate to introduce a cat brought as a curiosity from Egypt, say; that would have been easy and may well have happened. But the casual tabby? No.) And as for the talk, well, the conversations are not only practically composed of quotations from "Homer," but reflect *moods* of which you will find plenty of examples in the Homeric poems, even when critically considered—I mean, allowing for parts of them being later than others.

SEEING THE ROOTS

But what is more important, I must remember that moods and remarks due to those moods, which were *prevalent* in Asia Minor about 700 B. C., cannot have cropped up all of a sudden. Something led up to them. Therefore I *ought* to take into account what happened a hundred years after the period I am describing, when I am describing that period. I *ought* to see the roots of 700 B. C. ideas, moods, and sayings present in 900 B. C. Similarly, Dr. Ludwig *ought* to have taken into account the Acts and the Epistles. The first thing on reading his book that you feel is: "Given such a 'Jesus Christ,' nothing remotely like the Christian Church of the first century could ever have come into existence. By dint of not attending to Christianity, Ludwig has given a perfectly fictitious picture of Christ." As "Punch" cleverly puts it, you couldn't imagine Dr. Ludwig writing about Bismarck and treating the German Empire as if it never had existed.

FINAL CRITICISM

Therefore, should a Catholic find himself attacked about the book we have been talking of, he will have the right to say: "I have not read it. I have not read it, not only because it would disgust and offend me, but because I have reason to say that it is a worthless book scientifically. I understand that the author has not read nearly all the evidence. That what he has read he maltreats. He cuts out what he does not like; he rearranges what he retains, just as it pleases him; he interprets what he pleases *as* he pleases; he cuts out the whole of the consequences of Christ's personality, life, and work, whereas those consequences throw a most valuable light upon that from which they flowed,

I know that it would require an expert to judge the book in an expert way—neither you nor I, dear sir, are experts. Neither of us can *really* judge the book. That being so, I now go further, and say that its author *cheats*. He knows quite well that the people for whom he has written his cheap book will not be able to criticize. They will accept from him his picture of Jesus Christ as a naive young countryman, full of honest democratic and indeed mildly 'labor' notions, talking amiably about the goodness of God and how we ought to love one another; and then, partly under the inspiration of a sort of savage revivalist whose influence he can't quite shake off, really beginning to think a lot of himself, and finally, under pressure of the populace, and excited by the discovery that he can 'suggest' nerry people into feeling well, becoming quite unbalanced and thinking himself God's promised messenger.

"The Government is annoyed, vested interests, both lay and ecclesiastical, are furious, and get him arrested and condemned. All his dream-castles fall; he dies in despair; a hysterical woman or two refuse to believe that he is really dead. . . . Old Renan, once upon a time, invented a tale something like that, about St. Paul—he said it would be amusing to think of Paul dying by some roadside, sighing: 'So I was wrong after all!' But Renan hadn't the nerve to say that that *happened*. Ludwig devotes a whole book to a far more fantastic theme, and says it *did* happen—anyhow, he wants you to think it did. So he cheats. And one's opinion swings back—he is not honest and generous like his compatriot, Mr. Montefiore, who doesn't believe in Christ, but would like all Jews to acknowledge in Him a fine ethical teacher: he *does* want to have a slap at the believing Christian; he does want to reduce Jesus of Nazareth to something rather mean: and he lays himself out to do it. The questions are begged: the dice are loaded: the evidence is mutilated and the relics thereof are cooked, *for that purpose*."

And Anglican clergymen applaud. "How sweetly *human* is this book!" Well, I have often said that Catholics will soon be the only Christians in belief. May they be correspondingly Christian in their life.

A Caricature of Christ

Reprinted from the "Southern Cross" of South Africa

The following letter by Fr. Francis Woodlock, S.J., appeared in the *Evening Standard*. A similar letter sent to the *Daily Express* was refused publication. Can we wonder at the spread of rationalism and paganism in our midst?

Sir,—I am amazed at the approval shown by your reviewer to Ludwig's "Son of Man." I have read through the book carefully three times, and cannot escape the conviction that it is a blasphemous caricature of Christ.

"The Man," as portrayed by his German Jew biographer, does not rank as high in character as Napoleon or Bismarck, nor even, I believe, as the Kaiser. He is a weak, characterless neurotic creature, as passive to His environment as a piece of plasticine, and as unstable. At every step He is mastered by circumstance.

Ludwig represents Him as dying in despair, disillusioned, with His mind swamped by blasphemous thoughts against the Heavenly Father who has failed to rescue Him from torment by a miracle.

Ludwig depicts Him who has been universally accepted as the ideal and perfect Man, as continually "discouraged," as "listless," "fanatical," "in a rage," "mastered by chilly pride," "out of humor," "the victim of arrogant ecstasy," "haunted by horrible faces," and recurring doubts as to His mission. Psychologically, he is as impossible as a square circle.

That such a man should be able to hypnotize a cook into the belief that water is wine, as Ludwig represents Him doing at Cana, is only less credible than that He should be, by His magnetic personality, the greatest "faith healer" known to history.

Such a man as Ludwig has created might stir up an ephemeral revival in a Welsh village; he could never have been the Founder of Christianity, which has transformed the world.

Ludwig seems to have faced the dilemma: Christ who claimed to be Divine was either the Son of God or insane, and to have accepted the second alternative. His psychological thesis is refuted by a *reductio ad absurdum*.—Yours, etc.

Francis Woodlock, S.J.

Catholic Action

THE MOST REVEREND ANTONY COUDERT, O.M.I.

Archbishop of Colombo

Reprinted from the Bombay "Examiner"

THE general end of Catholic Action is to replace the human race under the empire of Our Lord Jesus Christ—to restore all things in Christ, not only what is directly incumbent on the Church in virtue of her Divine mission, which is to lead souls to God, but also what springs spontaneously from that Divine mission: Christian civilization is the ensemble of all and of every one of the elements that constitute it. Its particular objectives are:

1. To combat by every just and legal means anti-Christian civilization; to repair by every means the grave disorders arising from it.

2. To secure for Jesus Christ His rightful place in the family, in the school, in society.

3. To reestablish the principle of human authority as representing that of God.

4. To take sovereignly to heart the interests of the people and particularly those of the laboring and agricultural classes, not only in inculcating in the hearts of all the religious principle, the only true source of consolation in the anguishes of life, but in endeavoring to dry their tears, to soften their pains, to ameliorate their economic condition by wise measures.

5. To seek occasion consequently to render the public laws conformed to justice, and to correct or to suppress those which are not.

6. Finally to defend and to sustain with a truly Catholic spirit the rights of God in all things and the rights not less sacred of the Church.

A VERITABLE APOSTOLATE

Catholic Action, which proposes to restore all things in Christ, constitutes a veritable apostolate for the honor and

glory of Christ Himself. It has always come to the aid of the Church and the Church has always given it a favorable welcome. The present time calls specially for action, but an action which devotes itself without reserve to the integral and scrupulous observance of the Divine laws and of the prescriptions of the Church, to the open and fearless profession of religion, to the exercise of charity under all its forms, without any thought of self or earthly advantages. It is important that all the works which constitute Catholic Action should be maintained with energy, and, more important still, that they should be given the developments which the circumstances of things and persons reclaim. This task may appear arduous and difficult to pastors and Faithful; it is none the less evidently necessary, and it must be ranked amongst the primordial duties of the pastoral ministry and of the Christian life.

FIELD IS IMMENSE

Immense is the field of Catholic Action; by itself it excludes absolutely nothing of what, in any manner whatsoever, directly or indirectly, belongs to the Divine mission of the Church. It is not only men clothed with the priesthood, but all the Faithful without exception who should devote themselves to the interests of God and of souls. It is necessary that laymen, who love the Church, our common mother, and who, by their words and their writings, can usefully uphold the rights of the Catholic religion, should multiply their works for its defense. In order to accomplish Catholic Action, Divine grace is required, and the apostle does not receive it if he is not united to Jesus Christ.

All those, therefore, who are called to direct, or who consecrate themselves to promote the Catholic movement should be Catholics capable of the highest endurance. The first and the greatest criterion of the Faith, the supreme and unshakable rule of orthodoxy, is obedience to the magisterium, always living and infallible, of the Church, established by Christ, the pillar and the ground of truth. This obedience should be perfect, because it belongs to the essence of the Faith, and it has this in common with the Faith, that it cannot be divided. Moreover, if it is not absolute and perfect in every point, though it may still bear the name of obedience, it has no longer anything in common with it.

The duty of all Catholics—a duty which must be fulfilled religiously and inviolably in all circumstances as well in private life as in social life and public life—is to guard firmly and to profess without timidity the principles of Christian truth taught by the magisterium of the Catholic Church. As St. Thomas says: "Everyone is bound to manifest publicly his faith, either in order to instruct and encourage the other Faithful or to repel the attacks of adversaries." Not to resist error is to approve of it; it is smothering truth to refuse to defend it. Whosoever ceases to oppose an open crime may be regarded as a secret accomplice.

FALSE PRETEXTS

There are certain false prettexts tending to diminish in the minds of men the gravity of this duty and to "minimize" the truth. These must be avoided:

(1) The hope of attracting the benevolence of others. How grave is the error of those who, thinking thus to deserve well of the Church and to labor fruitfully for the eternal salvation of men, permit themselves, through a prudence wholly worldly, large concessions to a false science, and that in the vain hope of gaining more easily the benevolence of the friends of error; in fact, they expose themselves to the danger of losing their souls. Truth is one and indivisible; eternally the same, it is not subject to the caprices of time.

(2) Human prudence. Amongst Catholics, when they should protect and vindicate the rights of the Church with the greatest zeal, a certain number, obedient to a sort of human prudence, show themselves timid and too submissive in their manner of acting. It will be readily understood that this conduct exposes them to grave dangers.

(3) The desire of peace. Grosser still is the error of those who, in the false and vain hope of obtaining peace, dissimulate the rights and the interests of the Church, sacrifice them to particular interests, diminish them unjustly, come to terms with the world. Since when has it come about that there can be accord between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial?

(4) Charity misunderstood. Catholic doctrine teaches us that the first duty of charity is not in the toleration of erroneous convictions, however sincere they may be, or

in theoretical or practical indifference in regard to the error or vice in which we see our brethren plunged, but in the zeal for their intellectual and moral amelioration, not less than for their material well-being.

NO BITTERNESS

In order that this zeal may produce the fruits expected from it, and serve to form Christ in everyone, nothing is more efficacious than charity. It is vain to hope to draw souls to God by a zeal which has an element of bitterness; to reproach errors harshly and to reprehend vice does often more harm than good. For the things on which free discussion is allowed, this may be engaged in with moderation and with the object of discovering the truth; but all unjust suspicions and reciprocal accusations should be put aside. For the defense of the sacred rights of the Church and of Catholic doctrine, it is not acrimonious debates which are required, but a moderate and measured discussion, in which the weight of the arguments rather than the violence and the harshness of the style shows that the writer is on the side of reason. What is most important of all is that there should be amongst Catholics, unity of mind, unity of will, unity of action.